

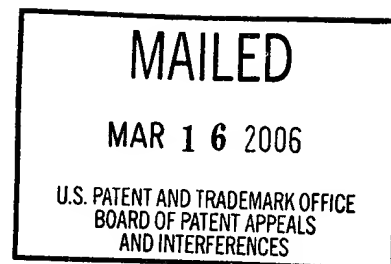
The opinion in support of the decision being entered today was not written for publication and is not binding precedent of the Board.

UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

BEFORE THE BOARD OF PATENT APPEALS
AND INTERFERENCES

Ex parte STEPHEN J. RUIZ

Application No. 09/716,113



ORDER RETURNING UNDOCKETED APPEAL TO EXAMINER

This application was electronically received at the Board of Patent Appeals and Interferences on March 6, 2006. A review of the application has revealed that the application is not ready for docketing as an appeal. Accordingly, the application is herewith being returned to the examiner. The matters requiring attention prior to docketing are identified below:

A review of the file indicates that on June 3, 2005, appellant filed an Appeal Brief under the rules set forth in 37 CFR § 1.192(c). However, the rules under 37 CFR § 1.192(c) were abolished on September 13, 2004, and replaced by 37 CFR § 41.37(c), which states:

(c)(1) The brief shall contain the following items under appropriate headings and in the order indicated in paragraphs (c)(1)(I) through (c)(1)(x) of this section, except that a brief filed by an appellant who is not represented by a registered practitioner need only substantially comply with paragraphs (c)(1)(i) through (c)(1)(iv) and (c)(1)(vii) through (c)(1)(x) of this section:

(i) Real party in interest. A statement identifying by name the real party in interest.

(ii) Related appeals and interferences. A statement identifying by application, patent, appeal or interference number all other prior and pending appeals, interferences or judicial proceedings known to appellant, the appellant's legal representative, or assignee which may be related to, directly affect or be directly affected by or have a bearing on the Board's decision in the pending appeal. Copies of any decisions rendered by a court or the Board in any proceeding identified under this paragraph must be included in an appendix as required by paragraph (c)(1)(x) of this section.

(iii) Status of claims. A statement of the status of all the claims in the proceeding (e.g., rejected, allowed or confirmed, withdrawn, objected to, canceled) and an identification of those claims that are being appealed.

(iv) Status of amendments. A statement of the status of any amendment filed subsequent to final rejection.

(v) Summary of claimed subject matter. A concise explanation of the subject matter defined in each of the independent claims involved in the appeal, which shall refer to the specification by page and line number, and to the drawing, if any, by reference characters. For each claim involved in the appeal, every means plus function and step plus function as permitted by 35 U.S.C. 112, sixth paragraph, must be identified and the structure, material, or acts described in the specification as corresponding to each claimed function must be set forth with reference to the specification by page and line number, and to the drawing, if any, by reference characters.

(vi) Grounds of rejection to be reviewed on appeal. A concise statement of each ground of rejection presented for review.

(vii) Argument. The contentions of appellant with respect to each ground of rejection presented for review in paragraph (c)(1)(vi) of this section, and the basis therefor, with citations of the statutes, regulations, authorities, and parts of the record relied on. Any arguments or authorities not included in the brief or a reply brief filed pursuant to § 41.41 will be refused consideration by the Board, unless good cause is shown. Each ground of rejection must be treated under a separate heading. For each ground of rejection applying to two or more claims, the claims may be argued separately or as a group. When multiple claims subject to the same ground of rejection are argued as a group by appellant, the Board may select a single claim from the group of claims that are argued together to decide the appeal with respect to the group of claims as to the ground of rejection on the basis of the selected claim alone. Notwithstanding any other provision of this paragraph, the failure of appellant to separately argue claims which appellant has grouped together shall constitute a waiver of any argument that the Board must consider the patentability of any grouped claim separately. Any claim argued separately should be placed under a subheading identifying the claim by number. Claims argued as a group should be placed under a subheading identifying the claims by number. A statement which merely points out what a claim recites will not be considered an argument for patentability of the claim.

(viii) Claims appendix. An appendix containing a copy of the claims involved in the appeal.

(ix) Evidence appendix. An appendix containing copies of any evidence submitted pursuant to §§ 1.130, 1.131, 1.132 of this title or of any other evidence entered by the examiner and relied upon by appellant in the appeal, along with a statement setting forth where in the record that evidence was entered in the record by the examiner. Reference to unentered evidence is not permitted in the brief. See § 41.33 for treatment of evidence submitted after appeal. This appendix may also include copies of the evidence relied upon by the examiner as to grounds of rejection to be reviewed on appeal.

(x) Related proceedings appendix. An appendix containing copies of decisions rendered by a court or the Board in any proceeding identified pursuant to paragraph (c)(1)(ii) of this section.

(2) A brief shall not include any new or non-admitted amendment, or any new or non-admitted affidavit or other evidence. See § 1.116 of this title for amendments, affidavits or other evidence filed after final action but before or with any appeal and § 41.33 for amendments, affidavits or other evidence filed after the date of the appeal.

(d) If a brief is filed which does not comply with all the requirements of paragraph (c) of this section, appellant will be notified of the reasons for non-compliance and given a time period within which to file an amended brief. If appellant does not file an amended brief within the set time period, or files an amended brief which does not overcome all the reasons for non-compliance stated in the notification, the appeal will stand dismissed.

The following sections are missing from the Appeal Brief filed June 3, 2005:

(1) "Summary of claimed subject matter" as set forth in 37 CFR § 41.37(c)(1)(v);

(2) "Grounds of rejection to be reviewed on appeal" as set forth in 37 CFR

§ 41.37(c)(1)(vi);

(3) "Evidence appendix," as set forth in 37 CFR § 41.37(c)(1)(ix); and

(4) "Related proceedings appendix," as set forth in 37 CFR § 41.37(c)(1)(x).

Accordingly, the Appeal Brief filed on June 3, 2005 does not comply with the new rules under 37 CFR § 41.37(c). It is required that a substitute Appeal Brief be submitted that is in compliance with 37 CFR § 41.37(c). For more information on the Board's new rules, please see the web page entitled "More Information on the Rules of Practice Before the BPAI," Final Rule at:

<http://www.uspto.gov/web/offices/dcom/bpai/fr2004/moreinfo.html>

Additionally, on August 22, 2005, the examiner mailed an examiner's answer.

However, the appeal conference is improper. The Manual of Patent Examining Procedures (MPEP) § 1208 states:

The participants of the appeal conference should include (1) the examiner charged with preparation of the examiner's answer, (2) a supervisory patent examiner (SPE), and (3) another examiner, known as a conferee, having sufficient experience to be of assistance in the consideration of the merits of the issues on appeal.

...

On the examiner's answer, below the primary examiner's signature, the word "Conferees:" should be included, followed by the typed or printed names of the other two appeal conference participants. **These two appeal conference participants must place their initials next to their names. This will make the record clear than an appeal conference has been held.** (Emphasis added).

Proper correction of the Examiner's Answer is required.

Accordingly, it is

ORDERED that the application is returned to the examiner to:

(1) hold the Appeal Brief filed on June 3, 2005 defective;

(2) to notify appellant to file a substitute Appeal Brief in compliance with 37 CFR § 41.37;

(3) for the examiner to consider the substitute Appeal Brief, vacate the Examiner's Answer mailed August 22, 2005, and issue a revised Examiner's Answer in accordance with the rules effective September 13, 2004, and correction of the Examiner's Answer showing that a proper appeal conference has been held;

- (4) have a complete copy of the substitute Appeal Brief and any subsequent Examiner's Answer scanned into the record;
- (5) written notification to appellant; and
- (6) for such further action as may be appropriate.

BOARD OF PATENT APPEALS
AND INTERFERENCES

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D. M. Shaw', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Dale M. Shaw
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